be able to accurately diagnose diseases, and quickly transmit the information to the global health community.

I urge other Senators to read this first report. This is an issue that has received far too little attention, and which directly affects the health of every American. Any disease, whether HIV/AIDS, malaria, TB, or others as yet unknown, which could infect and kill millions or tens of millions of people, is only an airplane flight away.

Accurate surveillance, which is the first step to an effective response, is critical. Yet today we are relying on a haphazard network of public, private, official, and unofficial components of varying degrees of reliability, patched together over time. It is a lot better than nothing, but the world needs a uniformly reliable, coordinated system with effective procedures that apply the highest standards. I look forward to GAO's next report, and its recommendations for action.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

Mr. MCCONNELL. As chairman of the Senate Rules Committee, which has jurisdiction over the campaign finance issue, and one who has been rather closely identified with the spirited debate in this arena over the past decade, I wholeheartedly support putting S. 1816, the Hagel-Kerrey bill, on the Senate Calendar.

That is not to say I would vote ''aye'' were there a rollcall vote on the bill as it is currently drafted.

Senator HAGEL's legislation was the backdrop for a comprehensive series of hearings held by the Senate Rules Committee between March and May of this year. The final hearing featured the testimony of Senator HAGEL, Senator KERREY, Senator ABRAHAM, Senator HUTCHISON, and Senator LANDRIEU. An impressive, to say the least, bipartisan lineup of Senators bravely stepping into the breach separating those who persist in trotting out the old, blatantly unconstitutional campaign finance schemes of the past, from others like myself who firmly believe that the first amendment is America's greatest political reform and must not be sacrificed to appease a self-interested editorial board at the New York Times.

The Senator from Nebraska has taken what for the past couple of years has been the biggest bone of contention in the campaign finance fight in the Senate—party soft money—and essentially split the difference between the opposing camps. Rather than an unconstitutional and destructive provision to entirely prohibit non-federal activity by the national political parties, Senator HAGEL has crafted a middle ground in which the party so-called ''soft'' money contributions would be capped. Yet, even a cap raises serious constitutional questions and would surely be challenged were one to be enacted into law. Nevertheless, the Hagel-Kerrey approach is more defensible and practicable than outright prohibition.

Coupled with the party soft money cap in the Hagel-Kerrey bill is an ameliorative and common sense provision to update the hard-money side of the equation by simply adjusting the myriad hard money limits to reflect a quarter-century of inflation. An inflation adjustment of the hard money limits is twenty-five years overdue. Candidates, especially political outsiders who are challenging entrenched incumbents, are put at a huge disadvantage by hard money limits frozen in the 1970s.

The lower the hard money limits are, the more that insiders with large contributor lists are advantaged. Incumbents and celebrities who benefit from the outset of a race with high name recognition among the electorate also start way ahead of the unknown challenger. The greatest beneficiary of low hard money limits are the millionaire and billionaire candidates who do not have to raise a dime for their campaigns because they can mortgage the family mansion, cash out part of their stock portfolio and write a personal check for the entire cost of a campaign.

As hard money limits are eroded through inflation and non-wealthy candidates are further hampered, election outcomes are ever more likely to be determined by outside groups whose independent expenditures and issue advocacy are completely unlimited. That is ''non-party soft money.''

Mr. President, absent from the attacks on party soft money is any acknowledgement by reformers that the proliferation is linked to antiquated hard money limits which control how much the parties can take from individuals and PACs to pay for federal election activities. It stands to reason that hard money limits frozen in 1974 and thereby doomed to antiquity are going to spawn an explosion of activity on the soft money side of the party ledger.

It also is not coincidence that increased soft money activity in the past decade corresponded to vastly increased competition in the political arena. We are amidst the third fierce battle for control of the White House in the past decade And every two years America has witnessed extremely spirited contests over control of the Congress. Democrats who had been exiled from the White House since Jimmy Carter's administration at long last got to spend some quality time at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue and are not keen to give that up. Republicans, after four decades in the minority, got to savor the view from the Speaker's office in the House of Representatives and would like very much to keep it. And we have seen more than a little action on the Senate-side of the Capitol.

Reformers look upon all this activity over the past decade in abject horror, seeing only dollar signs and venal ''special interests.'' I survey the same era and see an extraordinary period in which every election cycle featured a tremendous and beneficial national war of ideas over the best course for our nation to pursue in the coming years and which party could best lead America on that path.

All signs, Mr. President, of a competitive, healthy, and vibrant democracy.

While I strongly support the hard money adjustments in the Hagel-Kerrey bill, I remain concerned by the bill's silence in an area sorely in need of reform: Big Labor soft money. The siphoning off of compulsory dues from union members for political activity with which many of them do not agree is a form of tyranny which must not be permitted to continue. Senate Republicans have fought hard, and unsuccessfully, to protect union workers from this abuse. Democrats are understandably and predictably loathe to risk any diminution of Big Labor's contributions which may result from freeing the rank-and-file union members from forced support of Democratic candidates and causes, but the absence of reform in this area is unacceptable. Big Labor soft money and involuntary political contributions must be part of any comprehensive reform package which ultimately passes Congress.

With those provisos and a few others, I will close by again commending the Senator from Nebraska from his willingness to wade in a big way into one of the most contentious issues before Congress—an issue in which all Members of Congress have a vested personal interest but that affects not just us but every American citizen and group that aspires to participate in the political process. That is why the U.S. Supreme Court will be the final arbiter of any campaign finance bill of consequence. And those are the reasons we should continue to be cautions and deliberative as the effort continues for a nonpartisan, constitutional campaign reform package.

Mr. HAGEL. Mr. President, today we have moved a step closer to implementing comprehensive campaign finance reform. With the help of Senator MITCH MCCONNELL, Chairman of the Senate Rules Committee, the Open and Accountable Campaign Financing Act of 2000 will soon be placed on the Senate Calendar, ready for debate by the full Senate.

I introduced the Open and Accountable Campaign Financing Act of 2000 along with Senators BOB KERREY, SPENCE ABRAHAM, MIKE DEWINE, SLADE GORTON, MARY LANDRIEU, CRAIG THOMAS, JOHN BREAUX, KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON, and GORDON SMITH as a bipartisan approach to campaign finance reform because we felt it was a common sense, relevant and realistic approach. We offered it as a bipartisan compromise to break the deadlock on campaign finance reform and to bring forth a vehicle that could address the main holes in the net of our current system.

The purpose of our legislation is to place more control and responsibility

for the conduct of campaigns directly in the hands of the candidates. Our legislation is not the solution for all of the problems now facing us, but I believe it is a good solid beginning to accomplish meaningful campaign finance reform.

After a series of hearings in the Senate Rules Committee this spring on campaign finance reform, we will now be able to put a bill on the Senate Calendar that has bipartisan support. If we are to accomplish comprehensive reform this year, bipartisan support is essential and our bill has that support.

While I was very pleased with the recent vote in Congress to require disclosure for the '527' organizations, that bill is not a substitute for more comprehensive campaign finance reform. It is a solution for a small problem. We need to continue to fight for campaign finance reform that is broader and more comprehensive.

I am hopeful that the full Senate will be able to debate comprehensive campaign finance reform legislation, including the Open and Accountable Campaign Financing Act of 2000, this year. We have an opportunity to achieve something reasonable and responsible this year.

Again, I would like to thank Senator MCCONNELL for holding hearings in the Rules Committee on campaign finance reform and helping move the process along. I look forward to working with him and all Senators interested in advancing campaign finance reform.

VICTIMS OF GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, it has been more than a year since the Columbine tragedy, but still this Republican Congress refuses to act on sensible gun legislation.

Since Columbine, thousands of Americans have been killed by gunfire. Until we act, Democrats in the Senate will read some of the names of those who lost their lives to gun violence in the past year, and we will continue to do so every day that the Senate is in session.

In the name of those who died, we will continue this fight. Following are the names of some of the people who were killed by gunfire one year ago today.

July 26:

Frederick Branch, 17, Memphis, TN; Kenny Curry, 30, Chicago, IL; Mendell Jones, 17, Baltimore, MD; Eduardo Lezcano, 36, Miami-Dade County, FL; Andre Moore, 21, Baltimore, MD; Kenneth Plaster, 52, Houston, TX; Mark Pringle, 18, Baltimore, MD; Carlton Valentine, 33, Baltimore, MD; Unidentified male, Detroit, MI.

We cannot sit back and allow such senseless gun violence to continue. The deaths of these people are a reminder to all of us that we need to enact sensible gun legislation now.

RUSSIAN WARHEADS/DOMESTIC SECURITY

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss two issues of great importance to our national security and our energy security—the agreement between the United States and the Russian Federation which provides for the conversion of Russian highly enriched uranium (HEU) derived from the warheads into fuel for civilian nuclear power plants, and the need for the United States to maintain a viable uranium enrichment capability.

First, let me give you a bit of history.

In 1992, the Energy Policy Act established the United States Enrichment Corporation as a wholly-owned government corporation to take over the Department of Energy's uranium enrichment enterprise. The Corporation was to operate as a business enterprise on a profitable and efficient basis and maximize the long-term valuation of the Corporation to the Treasury of the United States. The objective was to eventually privatize the Corporation as a viable business enterprise able to compete in world markets. Subsequently, the Corporation was selected as Executive Agent for, and entrusted with, the responsibility for carrying out the Russian HEU Agreement.

Enactment of the 1992 Act was the culmination of a decade of bipartisan effort spearheaded by Senators DOMENICI and Ford. Extensive hearings were held in both the House and the Senate and the legislation garnered the strong support of the Bush Administration.

Recognizing the complexity of privatization and the national security implications of the Russian HEU Agreement, Congress enacted the USEC Privatization Act of 1996. The Act provided the mechanics for privatization, clarified the relationship between a private USEC and the U.S. Government, and addressed concerns related to the implementation of the Russian HEU Agreement. The Corporation was sold in July of 1998.

Implementation of the Russian HEU Agreement has been important for the government and USEC. This government-to-government agreement facilitates Russian conversion of highly enriched uranium taken from their dismantled nuclear weapons into fuel purchased by USEC and resold for use in commercial nuclear power plants. The program is financed as a commercial transaction.

Every day, new warnings are heard about the ability of one rogue state or some well-financed terrorist to obtain weapons-grade nuclear materials on the black market. The Russian HEU Agreement addresses those concerns by converting thousands of nuclear warheads into fuel for electric power plants—the quintessential swords to plowshares concept. In spite of some start-up problems, implementation of the Agreement has resulted in the conversion of the equivalent of nearly 4,000 nuclear warheads into fuel for U.S. commercial power plants. The process, as well as purchases and shipments to USEC, continues.

From the outset, many felt there were built-in contradictions between the objectives of maintaining a viable domestic uranium enrichment capability while controlling the disposal of former Soviet nuclear weapons. But, all things considered, the program to date has been a success. Without question our Nation's national security—our most important charge as lawmakers—has been enhanced by implementation of this Agreement.

Mr. President, the Russian HEU Agreement contributes to our Nation's security, but the Agreement also adversely affects the enterprise that makes this commercial solution to a national security problem possible. This difficulty was understood when the government adopted this program. Purchases of large quantities of Russian weapons derived material result in growing effects on the companies in the private sector domestic nuclear fuel cycle. Our uranium mining, conversion, and enrichment industries have been affected. The result has been steadily declining market prices for all phases of the nuclear fuel cycle. USEC, its plant workers, and the communities dependent upon those plants are being hit especially hard. As Executive Agent, USEC has suffered substantial losses due to fixed price purchases from Russia as well as increased costs due to reduced levels of domestic production resulting from introduction of the Russian material into the market.

Earlier this year, and with the support of the Administration, USEC had been negotiating with Russia to amend the Agreement to include market-based pricing. I have been advised that USEC closely coordinated its plans and intentions with the President's Interagency Enrichment Oversight Committee at all phases of its discussions with the Russians. Yet, as USEC and the Russians were meeting in Moscow to sign the new Agreement, the Department of Energy, a member of the Oversight Committee, prevented the signing at the last minute.

I can not understand why the Energy Department would prevent the adoption of an amendment that would stabilize the Agreement through the remaining thirteen years of the program. Reportedly the terms were acceptable to both parties. In addition, the Agreement would have protected the interests of our own domestic nuclear fuel industry. As part of the Agreement, Russia wanted USEC to purchase commercially produced enrichment in addition to the weapons derived enrichment. USEC negotiated terms consistent with a previous Administration approved program making it mandatory that this additional quantity be matched with domestically produced enrichment. In addition, no additional natural uranium would be brought into the domestic market. The amendment to the Agreement was specifically crafted so that no damage would be inflicted upon the domestic nuclear fuel cycle as a result of purchasing the additional material.

The Department of Energy's action threatens to destabilize the agreement.